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## ART. IX.—CRITICAL NOTICES.

- 1.—*A Sermon preached to the Church in Brattle Square, in two Parts, July 18, 1824.* By JOHN G. PALFREY, A. M. Pastor of that Church. Published by Request. 8vo. pp. 81.

THE interest of this discourse is not confined to the events commemorated by the preacher, as having been remarkable in the history of the Church in Brattle Square, but is increased by an account of the life and actions of men, who have held important stations in society, and been ornaments to their country. Among the clergymen, successively at the head of that church, have been men not only of the highest theological and literary rank, but who have exercised a wide influence over the political and social concerns of the community. Dr Colman, the first pastor, was a correspondent of bishop Hoadly, Dr Watts, and bishop Kennett; he was the medium through which benefactions to a large amount for Harvard College were received from Holden and Hollis; and he was often employed by the legislature of Massachusetts in drafting letters and addresses on the affairs of the colony. He died in 1747. Mr Palfrey speaks of him in the following manner.

‘Among the worthies of the Massachusetts clergy, we can perhaps select no character, which we may regard with more thorough esteem, than that of Dr Colman; and not much more may be said of any man. If his mind was not of that class, by which great revolutions are produced in the intellectual or social world, it was still one of uncommon comprehensiveness, penetration, wisdom, and activity; and it had been cultivated by an enlarged acquaintance with books and men. His writings, besides giving token to a liberal spirit, a well disciplined understanding, various knowledge, and a warm heart, show, for the period in which they were produced, a remarkable acquaintance with the true beauties of composition. To nature and to opportunity he was probably alike indebted for a manly and winning address. Yet, formed as he was for the admiration of a community like this, by a union of accomplishments separately possessed by very few, he rose above the ambition of being eminent, to the ambition of being useful. With all his powers to impress and attract, he was not a man to be content with the notoriety, which consists in being followed by the tasteful, and applauded by the talkative. Like every other man, who thinks it better to be serviceable than to be flattered, he gave himself much to occupations, of which fame takes no cognisance. He was industrious, as every man needs to be, who would make

himself felt while he lives, and remembered when he dies. He possessed a truly kind heart, as is shown by his generous treatment of Mather, a man, whose character, intellectual and moral, has been sometimes astonishingly overrated ; by his constant affection for his colleague, whose views were sometimes different from his own, and who was not a person very easy to differ from without estranging ; and by the truly parental attachment, which, after his colleague's death, he transferred to his son. He was a man of liberal public spirit, and of active and enlarged benevolence. The poor of his charge always found in him a brotherly attention to their wants. The town was his debtor for improvements, which he hazarded his popularity to effect. The College, besides owing, in a great part, to his influence the brilliant presidency of Leverett, and the bounty of the Hollises and Holdens, was indebted to him through a course of years for various services, not more honorable and important than laborious. He was animated by the distinguishing spirit of Christian philanthropy, and desired to do extensive good to the souls of men. It was at his instance, that this Church, and others of the town, voted to make a contribution, twice in each year, to form what was called an *Evangelical Treasury*, devoted to the extension of the knowledge and influence of religion. He was a man, finally, of true piety, proved in a series of domestic trials, some of a kind the hardest to be borne ; in the zealous services of a successful ministry, and by the uniform tenor of a sober, righteous, and godly life.' pp. 11—13.

For many years William Cooper was colleague with Dr Colman, and they were both succeeded by Samuel Cooper, so much distinguished for the active part he took in the early scenes of the Revolution.

'The ministry of Samuel Cooper,' says Mr Palfrey, 'had but just begun, when he lost the friendship and counsel of his and his father's venerable associate. He was a young man of great promise, which his subsequent life in no degree discredited. He had been known to the society from his childhood. He had had the advantage of the prayers, instructions, and example of a most pious and watchful parent. He had come from college with a blameless character and a high literary reputation, and he had inherited his father's place in the heart of the venerable shepherd of the flock. He had not begun to preach, when the society turned their attention to a supply of the vacant office ; but partly, as it seems, through the influence of Dr Colman, he was invited to officiate here as soon as his studies should be completed. December 31, 1744, he was elected colleague pastor ; and having made a request similar to his father's on the like occasion, was ordained, and entered on the active duties of his cure in the second following year, May 21, 1746.

‘The life of Dr Cooper was one of various and conspicuous usefulness. His education, from the first, had been a suitable preparation for eminence ; nor were his advantages wasted on an unpromising subject. Nature had marked him out for a leading man. Acuteness, vivacity, versatility, decision, and the capacity of severe application, were prominent characteristics of his mind. In addition to a person uncommonly dignified and engaging, and a most melodious voice, he possessed in remarkable perfection what seemed a natural fluency and grace, and he had cultivated the arts of writing and speaking with laborious assiduity. If not enjoying the reputation of being extensively learned, he was, however, familiar with the best writers, and was always found in possession of the information which the exigency required. To less uncommon endowments, he joined an address, and what is called a *talent for affairs*, which, if he had not been the leading divine, would perhaps have distinguished him as the most accomplished gentleman and adroit statesman of his country and time. He filled the clerical office at a period, when it had not ceased to be understood to give the right and opportunity to exert an important influence in public affairs ; and in the revolutionary movements of this quarter, he had an agency scarcely second to any man’s. He was the confidential friend of Adams, Hancock, and other leading spirits of the time. It was to him that the famous letters of Hutchinson were transmitted, which kindled such a flame against the English ministry and their government here ; and among the writings, which alternately stimulated and checked the public mind in that season of stormy excitement, there were perhaps none of greater efficiency than those of Dr Cooper. If other hands launched the lightning, his guided the cloud.

‘But it is chiefly of his ministerial character that I ought here to speak. With such gifts as those of Dr Cooper, it was impossible that a good man should not be eminently useful in his chosen and peculiar sphere of labor. Unhappily the Church records do not furnish materials for estimating the success of his ministry, having been almost entirely neglected by him in the midst of his various cares. It is certain, however, that his preaching was attended with as great interest, to say the least, as that of any of his contemporaries ; and that his society was numerous, and comprehended a large number of distinguished citizens. His published sermons,—methodical, elaborate, animated and impressive,—would certainly be ranked, in this better day of pulpit eloquence, as productions of unusual merit. It has perhaps been sometimes taken for granted, by persons not particularly acquainted with his habits, that the active part, which he took in political concerns, must have interfered with the punctual discharge of his pastoral duties. But of

this, no doubt, his parishioners were best able to judge ; and I do not find that such an impression concerning him exists in the minds of the small remnant of them, who survive. On the contrary, I find strong traces of the respect and affection, with which his parochial services inspired them ; and, while his name appears to the public view prominent upon the records of patriotism, in the memory of his religious associates it is embalmed no less in the odour of sanctity.

‘Dr Cooper, like his predecessors, died suddenly ; December 29, 1783.’ pp. 15—17.

Dr Cooper was succeeded by Mr Thacher, whose character and high qualifications for his office are thus described by the author.

‘With a view to fill the office vacated by the death of Dr Cooper, the attention of the society was turned to Rev. Mr Thacher, of Malden. The preference created by Mr Thacher’s established professional reputation and peculiar eloquence, might not improbably be strengthened by regard to the earnest part he had taken in the late revolutionary struggle, and possibly, even, by partiality for a name, than which there is none more illustrious in the annals of the New England ministry. Mr Thacher had no sooner been introduced to the sacred office at Malden, which was so early as his nineteenth year, than he acquired a popularity so great, that it is recorded of him, that “no young man ever preached to such crowded assemblies.” From his childhood he had devoted himself to the ministry of religion ; and his whole mind, as it was expanded, had formed itself to this work. To rapid and clear conceptions, a temper equally affectionate and frank, a lively imagination, and a nice sensibility, he added the recommendations of a commanding presence, and a voice of extraordinary melody and compass. His preaching was direct, practical, and earnest ; and, like each of his predecessors in this place, he is represented to have possessed, in singular excellence, the gift of prayer. “Whitefield called him the young Elijah.” His fame had been extended by the circulation of some sermons, and a few other occasional works, which he had published ; but he is said to have owed his remarkable popularity not more to his evident piety and zeal, and the power of his mind and style, than to the graces of a most captivating elocution.’ pp. 18, 19.

Next in the succession of pastors of Brattle Square was Mr Buckminster, whose short life left so bright a page in the history of genius, letters, and religion ; whose memory still dwells with a cherished freshness in the minds of many, that knew him while living ; and whose name will remain an enduring star of glory, while virtue and intellect command the homage of men. Mr Palfrey recounts with feeling and eloquence the rare traits in the

character of this highly gifted scholar and christian. We have room for a short extract only.

‘Dr Thacher died, December 16, 1802, at Savannah in Georgia, whither he had gone in ineffectual search of relief from a lingering pulmonary consumption. His successor was the late Mr Buckminster, who was ordained January 30, 1805, and died suddenly, June 9, 1812. In the sentiments of love and veneration, with which his memory is cherished, I can more entirely sympathise. Of other wise and good men, who have ministered in this place, I have only read and been informed. Him I have heard and known; and who, that has heard him, has not thenceforward found religion invested in his mind with a beauty unknown before? He was in truth a singularly gifted man; of a judgment discriminating, independent, and exact; of a fancy profuse of images of the grand and lovely; of a various and accurate learning; of a sensibility keenly alive to the importance of truth, and the dangers and obligations of men; of a pure and fervid zeal; of a truly heavenly spirit. He was formed to interest men in religion; to win them and attach them to it. No one could look on his intellectual beauty,—no one could hear the softest tone of his rich voice,—without loving the spirit that dwelt in the expression of them both. He spoke to solemnise the levity of the young, and inform the wisdom of age; to shake the sinner’s purpose, and bind up in the softest balm of consolation the wounds of the Christian’s heart. Those of us, who have heard him, with a force and feeling all his own, plead the claims of our religion, describe its value, and disclose its hopes, may not expect, while we live, to witness anything approaching nearer to what we imagine of a prophet’s or an angel’s inspiration. He was one of those, who seem appointed to the high and needful office of conciliating to religion the minds of intellectual and tasteful men. God does not abandon them in the mazes of their reasoning pride, nor leave them to lay the flattering unction to their souls, that ignorance is the parent of devotion; but, from time to time, prepares for them splendid proof, such as this was, that

“Piety hath found  
Friends in the friends of learning, and true pray’r  
Hath flow’d from lips wet with Castalian dews.”

Such a combination as is presented in the character of a man, eminent at once in Christian graces and in human accomplishments, has a vast efficacy to make religion understood and prized. Religion sanctifies the latter, and shows their proper uses; and, in turn, is itself nobly recommended, by being exhibited in this imposing and attractive union.’ pp. 20, 21.

Mr Palfrey has added much to the value of his discourse by the large body of notes, which he has collected with great industry and

discrimination, and published as an appendix. These contain historical illustrations of many points, which could only be slightly mentioned in a general discourse. Among other things is a long and beautiful extract from the manuscript of President Kirkland's sermon, preached at the funeral of Mr Buckminster, for which Mr Palfrey acknowledges himself indebted to the kindness of the author. For our own benefit, and that of the public, we should be glad if other and more copious treasures could in some way be drawn from the same rich storehouse.

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2.—*A History of the Political and Military Events of the late War between the United States and Great Britain.* By SAMUEL PERKINS, Esq. 8vo. pp. 512. S. Converse. New Haven.

THE time has hardly arrived, when a philosophical and impartial history of the late war can be written. Although the waves of party feeling have subsided, which ran so high and turbulent amidst the events of that period, yet their influence still lingers in most minds, which are as yet sufficiently mature for composing a history. The long cherished excitement, which preceded and accompanied the war, imparted a deep tinge to the political atmosphere of the country, from which few persons at this day can be supposed to be free. Mr Perkins, however, pretends not to write a philosophical history, but only to present a narrative of facts; and in this point of view, his book is a better arranged and more convenient manual, for speedy reference to all the important incidents relating to the last war, than any we have seen.

The author takes up the subject *de novo*, and goes back to the origin of the doctrine, introduced by England into the law of nations in 1756, in regard to the commerce of neutrals with the colonies of belligerents, namely, 'that no other trade should be allowed to neutrals, with the colonies of a belligerent in time of war, than what is allowed by the parent state in time of peace.' He justly dates the commencement of the difficulties, which grew up into the late war, in the promulgation of this arbitrary law. It gave rise to the ridiculous notion of paper blockades, unjust prohibitory decrees, and the odious practice of impressment on board neutral vessels. In short, the retaliatory regulations adopted by England and France during the last continental war, the orders in council of the one, and the Berlin and Milan decrees of the other, showed an unprincipled disregard of the rights of neutrals, and of the acknowledged and sacred laws of nations, which, if persevered in, would speedily dissolve the relations of civilised society, and bring upon the world